

What is claimed is:

1. A method for processing and organizing pharmacy data for analysis, comprising the steps of:
 - a) defining a first set of standards for determining the validity of a batch file containing at least one pharmacy record;
 - b) defining a second set of standards for determining the relational integrity of each record in the batch file;
 - c) defining a third set of standards for determining the presence of any data errors in the records;
 - d) assembling at least one batch file by a data source, the batch file comprising a header, at least one pharmacy record and a trailer;
 - e) communicating the batch file from the data source to a data processor;
 - f) checking the batch file for validity in accordance with the first set of standards and either:
 - i) rejecting the batch file if it does not meet the first set of standards, and communicating a rejection report to the data source, or
 - ii) accepting the batch file if it meets the first set of standards, and storing at least one record from the batch file in a temporary table of a holding database;
 - g) reading a selected record from the temporary table;
 - h) checking the selected record for relational integrity in accordance with the second set of standards, and if any relational integrity errors are found:
 - i) quarantining the selected record, and
 - ii) generating an entry in an exception table for the selected record;

- i) checking the selected record for data errors in accordance with the third set of defined standards, and if any data errors are found:
 - i) quarantining the selected record, and
 - ii) generating an entry in the exception table for the selected record;
- j) transferring the selected record to a permanent table of the holding database if no relational integrity or data errors are found;
- k) repeating steps (g) through (j) until all records in the temporary table have been read; and
- l) transferring the records from the permanent table of the holding database to a data warehouse for selective access and analysis.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein communications between the data source and the data processor is via an electronic communications network.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the records comprise patient and transaction data.
4. The method of claim 3 wherein the records comprise details regarding pharmacy facility and personnel, patient payment plan information, patient information, lab codes, medical record codes, and prescription, dispensing and transaction information.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein the validity check comprises checking the header for file-naming convention errors, defects and missing information.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the checking of selected records for data errors comprises examining for invalid dates, codes, or amounts, missing data, and wrong alpha-numeric characters in data fields.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the data source further:

- a) corrects the rejected batch file, and
- b) communicates a corrected batch file to the data processor.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the steps are accomplished with the aid of at least one computer.

9. A method for processing and organizing pharmacy data for analysis, comprising the steps of:

- a) defining a first set of standards for determining the validity of a batch file containing at least one pharmacy record;
- b) defining a second set of standards for determining the relational integrity of each record in the batch file;
- c) defining a third set of standards for determining the presence of any data errors in the records;
- d) defining conditions for warnings regarding defects in the records;
- e) assembling at least one batch file by a data source, the batch file comprising a header, at least one pharmacy record and a trailer;
- f) communicating the batch file from the data source to a data processor;

g) checking the batch file for validity in accordance with the first set of standards and either:

- i) rejecting the batch file if it does not meet the first set of standards, and communicating a rejection report to the data source, or
- ii) accepting the batch file if it meets the first set of standards, and storing the valid batch file in a holding database;

h) reading a selected record of the batch file;

i) checking the selected record for relational integrity in accordance with the second set of standards, and if any relational integrity errors are found:

- i) quarantining the selected record, and
- ii) generating an entry in an exception table for the selected record;

j) checking the selected record for data errors in accordance with the third set of defined standards, and if any data errors are found:

- i) quarantining the selected record, and
- ii) generating an entry in the exception table for the selected record;

k) checking the selected record for warnings, and if any warnings are found:

- i) flagging the record for later corrective action, and
- ii) generating an entry in the exception table for the selected record;

l) transferring the non-quarantined records to a permanent table of the holding database;

m) repeating steps (h) through (l) until all records in the batch file have been read;

n) communicating the non-quarantined records from the permanent table to a data warehouse for storage in a predetermined organizational format; and

o) undertaking corrective action for the entries in the exception table.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein communications between the data source and the data processor is via an electronic communications network.

11. The method of claim 9 wherein the records comprise patient and transaction data.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the records comprise details regarding pharmacy facility and personnel, patient payment plan information, patient information, lab codes, medical record codes, and prescription, dispensing and transaction information.

13. The method of claim 9 wherein the validity check comprises checking the header for file-naming convention errors, defects and missing information.

14. The method of claim 9 wherein the checking of selected records for data errors comprises examining for invalid dates, codes, or amounts, missing data, and wrong alpha-numeric characters in data fields.

15. The method of claim 9 wherein the warnings include ICD9 diagnosis codes, and invalid facilities.

16. The method of claim 9, wherein the data source further:

- a) corrects the rejected batch file, and
- b) communicates a corrected batch file to the data processor.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the corrected batch file is communicated to the data processor via an electronic communications network.

18. The method of claim 9 wherein the records are checked for relational integrity by comparing the records to a master file.

19. The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of communicating a validation report to the data source.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein the report is communicated via an electronic communications network.

21. The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of querying the data warehouse.

22. The method of claim 9 wherein the steps are accomplished with the aid of at least one computer.